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4. — *Histoire des Paysans*. Par EUGÈNE BONNEMÈRE. Seconde édition, entièrement réfondue et considérablement augmentée. Paris : Sandoz et Fischbacher, Éditeurs. 1874. 2 vols. 12mo.

By the term *peasantry* is understood a class of tillers of the soil : a class, because the peasants are born to their condition, and any change in occupation or in dignity is with them an exceptional thing. Not a class of agricultural laborers, because a laborer is one who works for wages ; while peasants — so they work with their own hands — may be of all grades, from the serf of Russia, and the day-laborer of England, to the metayer of Italy, the peasant-proprietor of France, and the *Bonde*, or yeoman, of Sweden, who forms the fourth estate of the realm. There can be no peasantry, therefore, in a country like the United States, where those that till the soil do not form a class. Neither, we should think, is the term applicable in primitive communities like those of the early Germanic nations, which are essentially agricultural and at the same time purely democratic in their social organization. So, too, with communities developed out of states of society like these ; as, for instance, that of ancient Rome. By the side of an aristocracy like the Roman patriciate, which deemed cultivating the soil with one's own hand the only form of manual labor which was not degrading, — in which the story of Cincinnatus was possible, — there could be no peasant class. A peasantry must be the accompaniment of an idle or a moneyed aristocracy.

The peasantry is the most numerous class, and that whose functions are most fundamental in the economy of society : its history therefore is inferior in interest and importance to no other branch of social history. To write it, however, with any approach to completeness, is impossible in the present stage of historical inquiry. The origin of this class belongs to times of which we have but scanty knowledge ; and its subsequent condition and vicissitudes can be satisfactorily explained only in connection with its origin. This explanation must come, if at all, through those investigations into the primitive institutions and usages of society which have of late attracted so much attention. In especial we must have recourse to whatever throws light upon the primitive tenure of land, or on the origin and growth of feudalism. For the land, as well as the aristocracy, is essential to the existence of a peasantry.

M. Bonnemère has therefore judiciously undertaken, not a history of the *peasantry*, but of the *peasants*, — a simple and easier task, in-

asmuch as it implies — or may be construed as implying — rather the individuals than the class, and is therefore capable of a far more external and superficial treatment than would be expected from the other title. As is natural, he has confined his attention to France ; he has given a full and graphic sketch of the history of the French peasants, their condition and sufferings, and their several efforts at resistance. But it is not a history of that organic body or class which we call the French peasantry, — its origin, organization, and legal relations. It is impossible, for instance, to get from this book a complete and exact idea of the relation of the several groups of the peasantry to each other and to their lord ; the organization of a *seigneurie*, for instance, its agricultural administration and judicial system.

Even the sketch of the social condition of the peasants is incomplete, in that their incapacities and wrongs are described with an eloquent pen, but the brighter side of the picture — which certainly existed — is left almost untouched. Any person who wishes a lively picture of the numberless outrages and atrocities which marked the intercourse of the feudal with the *roturier* class, will find ample material here. There are also some suggestive pages describing the relations between the rural and the civic communities in their struggles against their feudal lords, — an aspect which is not at all familiar, but which M. Bonnemère has shown to possess great importance. We are accustomed to conceive of the enfranchisement of the communes as an exclusively civic movement. He shows that the movement spread to the rural communities, and in a few instances with some degree of success ; but that it failed of general success by reason of the poverty, isolation, and low culture of those who took part in it. Now the towns, — whose citizens, it must be remembered, belonged to the *roturier* class, — after obtaining their own franchises, and entering upon the enjoyment of local self-government, stood aloof from their rural brethren, who were engaged in struggling for the same liberties. Nay, they even helped to crush them : for these city communities were themselves proprietors of landed estates, cultivated by serfs ; their warfare with the barons made them, as it were, the peers of the barons, and raised them still higher above the unfortunate peasantry : and in this warfare, again, it was the peasantry that had to endure the devastations and cruelties of both belligerents. This was a suicidal policy on the part of the cities. In the heat of the contest with their feudal enemies, it isolated them from their natural allies, the villein class ; forced them to buy support from the king, and thus led speedily to the suppression of their own liberties.

Nevertheless, this policy, suicidal as it was in the long run, was

not wholly unaccountable or inexcusable at the time. The French villeins did not, like the English, compose a compact, organized body, but were destitute at once of effective fellowship and of leadership. Their very origin, so far as it can be traced, distinguishes them broadly. The English peasants were an essentially homogeneous body of men, the descendants of the Angles and Saxons who planted colonies in the fifth and sixth centuries. They were freemen by origin and by tradition. The French peasantry, as Guizot has pointed out, are the offspring of long generations of serfs and slaves : not to the Middle Ages alone, nor to the Frankish conquest, nor even to the Roman conquest of Gaul, do we look for its source ; even the Romans found Gaul cultivated by a servile class. Hence it is that the French peasants were in an infinitely lower state than the English. Mr. Hallam, after defining the two classes of villeins, — *in gross* and *regardant*, — goes on to say that in England “one only, and that the inferior species, existed” (Vol. I. p. 198). In this he appears to be only half right. In England, as he elsewhere shows, there was no difference in the legal relations of the villeins : and further, as he himself goes on, two pages afterwards, to remark, “it was only in respect of his lord that the villein, at least in England, was without rights” ; and in the eighth chapter he describes the condition of the English villeins in terms very different from those used by the author of the work before us in relation to even the higher class of the French villeins.

What is, however, of even more importance than the more favorable condition of the villeins, is that of the class above them, — the free tenants. There were free tenants in France as well as in England ; but there was no class of *freeholders*. The French *seigneurie* did not differ essentially in its constitution from the English *manor*. Each was divided into its demesne lands and its tenement lands ; and the tenement lands of each were occupied partly by free tenants and partly by villeins. But the free tenants, the *cenitaires* of the French institution, were as completely deprived of what we should now call political rights, as their neighbors of inferior degrees, the villeins and serfs. They were subjects of their lord, as well as tenants ; and so were the English socagers. But the English lord of the manor was, so to speak, a constitutional ruler ; his subjects had a share in the administration ; his feudal court — the court baron — was composed of its suitors, the freehold tenants (and sometimes even customary tenants or villeins) ; they gave the verdict, which the lord and his steward could only register. But the French lord was an absolute ruler ; he exercised jurisdiction by his own sole

authority, and his tenants—as well free as servile—had only to accept his judgment.

More than this, the French peasantry stood in none but a feudal relation to the land in which they lived. The memory of the great Frank Empire, and the great King Charles, who had ruled it as a national and sovereign ruler, had perished. The peasant, whether freeman, villein, or serf, belonged to a *seigneurie*, and it was only through its lord, an absolute lord, that he stood in any relation to the rest of France. In England, however oppressive the lord of the manor might be, still his tenants had other relations than to him. Every freeholder was, by virtue of his position, a member of the court, both of the hundred and of the county, and was thus, from the moment when knights of the shire were elected to represent the landed interest, invested with genuine political rights. Not only this, but even the villeins chose their own reeve or foreman, and were represented in these same courts by him and four of their own number. It is impossible to overestimate the consequences of this difference. The French communes naturally enough did not care to affiliate in any way with a class so contemptible; but the English boroughs and even the lesser barons were willing to make common cause with a class of whom the yeomen were the representatives.

We have perhaps sufficiently characterized M. Bonnemère's book. It is hardly doing justice to its qualities as a readable book, to say that its chief value is as a collection of materials; and yet this is strictly correct, so far as a history of the *institution* of the peasantry is to be considered. It is, as we have shown, somewhat one-sided and incomplete; there is a great deal of repetition in it, and a great monotony in telling over and over again the same story of wrongs and of ineffectual resistance; there is a lack of central thought about which the facts are grouped; with great industry and learning, there is a want of familiarity with the results of the latest scholarship, as evinced in the statement (Vol. I. p. 31) that the Franks systematically despoiled the proprietors of land in Gaul. With all this, it contains valuable collections of facts, well grouped under distinct heads.

The closing chapter, "*Vie privée des paysans et situation de l'agriculture*," gives an interesting account of the agricultural communities of the Middle Ages in France, and the remnants of these which still survive. The author shows that these communities were very widespread in the Middle Ages, and were a very salutary institution. Their origin he ascribes to an imitation of the monastic associations; of their organization he says very little, perhaps from the

paucity of testimony. It is just at this point, however, that we should be glad of additional light. The relation of these communities to those described by Von Maurer and Haxthausen in Germany, and by Nasse and Maine in England ; how far they were recognized by the law ; what class of the peasantry belonged to them, — these and similar questions, which present themselves as one reads the chapter, find no sufficient answer in it. Indeed, it is a good example of what we have pointed out as the chief defect of the book, that this important topic is reserved for a kind of appendix, rather than introduced where it belongs, as a part of the social organization of the Middle Ages.

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5. — *La Religion Romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins.* Par GASTON BOISSIER. Paris : Librairie Hachette et Cie. 1874. 2 vols. 8vo.

THE religious history of the ancient Romans falls into two very distinct epochs. The first is that of their native faith, a very peculiar and characteristic one, of course more or less affected by external influences, but still in the main an original growth of the Roman mind. With the powerful intellectual influence exerted by contact with the Greeks in the second century before Christ, there came a remarkable transformation. The Greek theology was not consciously and voluntarily substituted for the Roman : there was no thought of introducing new beliefs and ceremonies in place of the old, or even of adding anything admittedly foreign ; but the two religions were deliberately identified. Every Greek divinity, it was thought, must have his counterpart in the Roman pantheon ; and where this counterpart could not be readily recognized, some pains and ingenuity were exerted to make out an identity. Jupiter was clearly enough Zeus ; Minerva possessed the most striking attribute of Athena ; Neptune and Vulcan were at once seen to be the same as Poseidon and Hephæstos : but it was only by a very liberal construction that they could find a representative for Aphrodite in Venus, and for Dionysos in Liber. For Apollo and some of the lesser divinities there was no attempt made to find an equivalent.

Now the peculiarity of this identification was that a system of most attenuated personalities — almost pure abstractions — was brought in connection with a set of gods who were completely individualized, as thoroughly human in their attributes as their worshippers themselves. As the process did not consist in introducing or substituting Greek deities, but was simply one of identification, it followed that the human attributes of the anthropomorphized Greek gods were in-